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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2016
TAGS: PGOV KDEM IZ
SUBJECT: TALABANI SAYS JAFARI NOT YET A LOCK FOR PRIME
MINISTER

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) President Jalal Talabani informed Ambassador on
February 12 that the Shia Coalition had narrowly voted in
favor of current Prime Minister Jafari to remain in his post
by a count of 64 votes to SCIRI candidate Adil Abd al-Mahdi's
63 votes, with one Sadrist absent. Da'wa, Da'wa-Tanzim, and
the Sadrists have refused to work with former PM Ayad Allawi
and his Iraqi National Accord list in the new government,
according to Talabani. However, he continued, the Kurds have
already stated publicly that any national unity government
must include Allawi.

¶2. (C) Talabani then claimed that Jafari's re-election as PM
is not definite -- if Fadhila and SCIRI could be persuaded to
join a separate coalition. An alliance of the Kurds, all of
the disparate Sunni Arab lists, and Allawi's list would equal
142 seats; if Fadhila and SCIRI join, Talabani said, it would
be the end of the Shia Coalition. He added that such a
coalition could challenge Jafari's nomination as not being
truly representative of the people's will. Talabani reported
that he would talk to Abd al-Mahdi about this. Ambassador
stated that the U.S. supports the democratic process in Iraq
and that it seems as though Jafari had fairly won the Shia
nomination.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Appearing angry and forceful, Talabani made
clear in a press conference after the meeting that the Kurds
would not accept a cabinet that excluded Ayad Allawi's party.
 Talabani's press conference ratcheted up the political
posturing in government formation. END COMMENT.
KHALILZAD